1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

283 gualla by the 1895 expedition), and then hatcheled with the hupf or the edge of a shell; when the fibers are gathered in slender wisps or loosely wound coils, both of which were among the possessions of the Seri matrons at Costa Rica in 1894. So far as could be ascertained, the final processes parallel those of hair-cord making, i. e., the fibers are patiently sorted into strands, sized in the fingers and twisted by rolling on the thigh, the strands being subsequently combined in similar fashion.[1]

286 Neither the weaving nor the woven fabrics of the Seri have ever been seen by technologic students so far as known, though the fabrics are shown in Von Bayer's photographs and have been described by various observers. According to Señor Encinas, they resemble coarse bagging, and are woven or netted quite plainly. The ordinary sewing material is sinew, used in connection with a bone awl (a good example of which is illustrated in figure 35), a fish

412 [239]

FIG. 35.—Bone awl.

FIG. 36.—Wooden awls.

spine or bone, a cactus thorn, or either the mandible of a water-bird or a hard-wood skewer shaped after this natural needle (figure 36 *a* and *b*). Sometimes hair or vegetal fiber is substituted for the sinew; and for certain purposes an agave thorn, with the fibers naturally attached, serves for needle and thread.

[524]

[1] A rope-twisting device of the sort commonly employed by southwestern Indians was found in use by Seri boys at Costa Rica in 1894, and was included in the Seri collection; but the indications were that the device was a mere toy used like the horse-hair rattan made by its aid, only in youthful sports.

2: Kroeber E-5 (1930) 1931 NU31 Seri NU31

on a string around his neck, which he got from his father. It is a two inch length of cane, with a wooden stopper, containing a white powder of stone (?). A little of this powder put into fresh water, brings dew; into salt water, rain. 778 789

Similarly, Chico Romero wears on his neck a tiny spool-shaped object of wood, scarcely 2 cm. long, with notched ends. When he dies, this will burst; or rather, it seems that a larger object of the same shape, which another man keeps, will burst with thunder.

To get luck, a man paints a "cross" on his forehead, breast, and "bed" and goes to sleep. Then a dream comes in which he gets what he is thinking of. Sometimes the dream comes true; sometimes not. Some dreams are lies. 787

The soul (*alma*), he'ë'sax, is all over the body and is noiseless. It is "nearly the same as blood": when the blood is lost, the soul goes. Some say that when the Seri die they are reborn in the north as Cocopa. 774 775

There seem to be no special beliefs or practises about twins. 845

Antiso'ma (— Montezuma?) is the size of a child, has a beard, a golden staff, white clothes inside and black outside. He lives in a cave. Once he tried to take a young man away with him in order to dress him nicely. Later the young man's relatives went with him to find Antiso'ma again, but could not. 776

Songs

Toad was a woman who had only a breech-clout and wanted a cotton shirt. She said she would give herself to a man for one. 533

Coyote was a Seri once.

Pinacate (dung-beetle?) wanted a bride and was jealous about her.

Colapriets, the black-bellied ant, also was a man and wanted to marry the holoo'ctim ant. He was making a house of grass for her. She was afraid of him, and her relatives took her away.

Games

The four-tube-hiding game is played with canes open at one end. These canes are: blackened all over, old man; unpainted, old woman; blackened at one end, boy; blackened in the middle, girl. The boy and girl are made by slitting off slivers on two sides. The names serve as designations only; the differences between the tubes do not enter into the game. The player with the tubes turns around, puts a piece of twig into one, fills them all with sand, and throws them before his opponent, who tries to empty the twig from the *third* tube he selects. If so, he wins the canes, that is, the right to play. If the twig is in the first tube emptied, he loses 10; if in the second, 6; if in the fourth, 4. Counters are little natural shell disks. 524

2; Kroeber E-5 (1930)1931 NU31 Seri NU31

524 Dice are three splints of cane; tapering toward both ends, nearly flat. The concave inside is greenish white, the outside darker. The count is: 0 insides up, win 4; 1 inside up, win 1; 2 insides up, lose 1 and play; 3 insides up, lose 4. The 3 splints are stacked together, then thrown endwise against the palm, a piece of turtle shell, or anything similar, so as to fly forward and scatter on the ground. (Some players probably acquire a degree of skill in making the canes fall right.) A player repeats until he throws 2 whites or insides. For points scored, he draws lines on the ground in front of himself. His opponent erases his lines as he wins, or adds to them as he loses, until he himself is ahead, when he begins to mark his own lines. Ten points wins the game. A stick is then set in the ground by the winner, who goes on playing the next game. That is, if he has 8, and throws 4, he sets up his stick, erases 6 lines so as to start the new game with a credit of 2, and throws again. The Seri perform these additions and subtractions with the rapidity of a practiced white man.

A ring of people may play at once. Their scoring in relation to one another was not ascertained, but it is presumably each from his neighbor, with the totals shown by sticks.

Since with fair throws the losses in this game must equal gains, a lead of 10 over an opponent is as much as could expectably be played for if the game were not to be unduly protracted.

526 Football race is played with *palo fierro* balls, perhaps 3 inches in diameter, one to each side of 4 runners. The ball may be moved only with the foot. The race is along the beach, where cactus and brush do not interfere. The distance, according to places named to Sr. Thomson and known to him, is about 6 miles. The men on a side relieve each other in informal relays; usually only 1 or 2 finish. The [648] Seri once went north to play the Papago this game, but lost.

Shinny is a woman's game, preliminary to the football race. Four women to a side carry sticks with which they try to throw an 8-12 inch hoop to a goal mark at the end of a short field. Behind each side stand the 4 men runners who are to race with a ball.

Notes on Material Culture

482 Women carry loads on their heads with a ring: men with the pên, Spanish *palanca* or lever, a stick over the shoulder, with load [171] hung from each end. These are the usual Sonora and Sinaloa Indian ways of carrying.

516 The Seri sit and lounge randomly. The men squat, occasionally cross the legs, put them sidewise, or sit with one knee up. The women wear long cloth skirts, but apparently sit just as variously.

714 Body armor, *naiłanikap*, with sleeves and helmet, and a shield. saXe'tiX, both of hide, were worn. The shield was described as 4 or 5 feet high, roof-shaped toward the front. It is not clear whether

*825 get paid for the fish or for the turtles at so much per kilo and they have the fish scaled for them on the spot by the Mexican fish traders. Some, in fact, developed a pretty good idea of the weights and have learned to make close estimates of the weight of the catch.

Their frequent attempts to guess the age of the animals even when they do not know it may well be in part due to their gambling talents. The [525] Seris are inveterate gamblers and it is possible that this habit enters into many other facts of their lives, not only at the games.

Development

According to the Seri, all mammals are born alive. On this subject there has been a remarkable uniformity of opinion among all of my informants. The only uncertain information concerns the porcupine where the informant who recognized this animal was unable to say whether it laid egg or whether it came forth alive. But as indicated, the porcupine is not well known to them and also does not resemble any of the familiar animals overly much. The size of the litter varied and in general corresponded pretty much to the actual situation in nature. Large litters, the Seris think, are typical of the coyote, the figure of 7-8 having been given by all informants which would indicate that this has been derived from actual observation. The coyote in this respect has been often referred to as "one like the dog." The kangaroo rat is next in line with six the most frequently mentioned number. Most other animals have a pair of offspring or only one. Bat, the Indians said, had two (which is just that). The killer whale is said to have only one. Interesting variation has been indicated in the bighorn. Here the ideas on the subject varied from 2-3 to one at a time. But one of the informants suggested that the female bighorn has only one young for the first time but at the next pregnancy delivers two young.

In general, the size of the litter has been indicated for the vast majority of species.[1]

The Seris are also aware of the limited or nonexistent parental function of the male. In at least half of the species the young, they indicated, "do not know the father." But the female parental functions have always been indicated, the suckling and the maternal care as well. On the subject of the aquatic mammals other than the sea lion there seems to be a certain amount of confusion—for here at least suckling has not been indicated or in the grey whale it has been indicated that there is not suckling by the female of the young.

Mating season was always mentioned but the informants could not always tell when mating took place. Further discussion of this subject will take place under the heading of *Seasonality*. Pairing apparently is not the mammalian feature, the Seri believe, as already indicated by their idea of the parental care. They elaborated more on the subject when discussing the sea lions, indicat-

[1]Jaguar is said to have "many," "maybe eight"—reasons already explained.

[P. 128]